

As a Buddhist Where Should One Begin And Continue to Do What Thereafter

The Teaching of the Buddha
comes to the world as a Radiant New Light
Expulsion of the Aṭṭhaṅga-Uposatha-Sīla
from the religious life of the Upāsakas and Upāsikās
the Buddhist Lay-men and Lay-women

by

Ven Professor Dhammavihari Thera
Buddhist Cultural Centre

Introduction

This little monograph which I present to you with sincere hopes of self-detection and self-correction in the area of Buddhist religious practices has taken me much longer than any other I have undertaken in recent times. Over a period of more than fifty years they have come to be wildly over grown, even beyond a point of meaningful recognition. The subject of study here is one that has engaged my attention from my childhood days. Long before being a teenager I grew up with my brothers and sisters in my suburban home, more than a hundred miles away from metropolitan Colombo, under one single roof where we all lived together with our parents and our grand parents. What these seniors [*kule jeṭṭhā* or *vuddhā*] meant to us in the household.

In the world today, life-styles have changed and along with it, thinking has changed and people have changed too. All have changed, hand in hand.

Centering around the home where I was born and grew up, there was a delightful community of humans, including near and distant relatives and friendly

associates. I had nearly dozens of *māmās* and *nandās*, *bāppās* and *kuḍammās* whose company provided us a living world which, all the time, surfaced loving, sharing and caring as inseparable qualities of human life. Imperceptibly though, these virtues naturally seeped into our lives, and we harmless brats acting and reacting harmoniously with our elders. Ceaseless supplies of home-made sweets prepared out of country-grown mung and gingerly flowed into our midst and kept our pockets filled with things to eat and our hearts reciprocally filled with joy and love towards those who constantly befriended us.

I give here this brief introductory note about my early childhood days as a Buddhist to stress the need of a quiet and peaceful home-background, with the constant impact of worthy elders who had commendable maturity and wisdom, to provide the appropriate environment [i.e. *patirūpa-desa-vāso*] for the children to grow up with a true Buddhist spirit in them. What the growth process should be thereafter, we shall attempt to clarify in the monograph we shall present to you.

This was the pattern of Sinhala Buddhist culture we knew more than eighty years ago. We lived harmoniously in a mixed Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim community, residing in distinct localities of the town. Less than a hundred years of ethnic, religious and political fermentation in this island country, through the machinations of misguided leadership is bringing about total destruction and ruin of its more than thousand year old religio-spiritual cultural synthesis.

My endeavour in this monograph is to examine the more-than-obvious decadence of Buddhism in Sri Lanka today, both in theory and practice. The rot has set in, more or less, from the early centuries of the introduction of the religion to the island.

The specific theme which I deal with in this monograph is the relative significance of *sīla* observances in the life of a Buddhist, then and now. As far as we are aware, we can give historical antiquity and authenticity to three categories of *sīla* in Buddhism. Over to our Monograph now for your perusal.

Dhammavihar

i

The Teaching of the Buddha comes to the world as a Radiant New Light

As a Buddhist where should one begin. This should rightly be the primary question of every one who chooses to call himself or herself a Buddhist, whether by birth or by choice at any later point in time. The answer is unambiguous and clear. Here it is.

With the three-fold refuge [*tisarāṇa*] and
the five-fold injunctions of moral goodness [*pañca-sīla*]

With the appearance of the Buddha in the world and the delivery of his spiritual message to mankind, there were found among his many listeners numerous householders, both young and old, who gained immense trust in him [*taṃ dhammaṃ sutvā tathāgate saddhaṃ paṭilabhati* MN. I 179], i.e. literally set their hearts upon him, on discovering the veracity and validity of what he preached. In his own words, [*pubbe cāhaṃ bhikkhave etarahi ca* MN I 140] what he taught in the early years of his mission, as well as latterly, was the unsatisfactory or grief-generating nature in the life process of human existence in the world and the consequent dissatisfaction resulting from the inability of the human to adjust himself smoothly to this situation. It is the totality of this maladjustment of man, internally and externally, which comes to be called *dukkha*. *Dukkha* is not something which exists in the world, *per se*. The Buddha's basic teachings, at the very outset, included also the possibility of bringing about an end to this *dukkha* [*dukkhañcā'haṃ paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ* MN I 140].

At this time of history in the world, that is more than two and half millennia ago, this religious message of the Buddha was a radiant new light, in marked

contrast to the polytheistic beliefs currently held by the Indians at the time. It undeniably provided an adequately rich background for a bountiful religio-cultural growth. Those who heard him, referred to the Buddha's teaching, both with regard to his explanation of the life process of the human on earth, i.e. the Buddha's *dhamma*, as well as his way of release there-from, i.e. the life of *brahmacriya* he preached, as being abundantly rewarding. They spoke of his *dhamma* as being totally wholesome [*sāttamaṃ savyañjanamaṃ*] at the beginning, the middle and the end [*ādi-kalyāṇamaṃ majjhe kalyāṇamaṃ pariyosāna-kalyāṇamaṃ*] and to the way of life he prescribed as being totally perfect [*ekanta-paripuṇṇamaṃ*] and being demandingly immaculate [*ekanta-parisuddhamaṃ*].

It must be mentioned at the very outset that there is adequate evidence to believe that this penetrative awareness of the stressful nature of the life-process of man was part of the Buddha's pre-enlightenment vision. It was legitimately his own, we believe, as *saṃsāric* inheritance, i.e. derived from the religio-cultural growth of his former lives. This is what comes to be called the perfections practised by him or *pāramiyo pūretvā*. This vision, the Buddha himself claims, is what he had already come to possess prior to his enlightenment, while he was yet aspiring for his enlightenment. The original text which records this runs precisely as follows in the Buddha Vagga of the Samyutta Nikāya: *Pubbe'va me abhisambodhā an-abhisambuddhassa bodhisatass'eva sato etadahosi. Kicchaṃ vatā'yaṃ loko āpanno jāyati ca jīyati ca mīyati ca cavati ca uppajjati ca* [SN.II.p.10]. This means 'Prior to my enlightenment, while I was still an aspirant to Buddha-hood, this idea occurred to me. This world is placed in a terrible predicament in that beings are born into it, they continue their growth, entering upon decay and disease. Finally they die, and passing away from one life to another through time and space, are born again'.

This is the reality [*yathā-bhūta* or 'how things have come to be'] which exists in the world, the pattern on which the world has come into being and continues to be so. Yet this truth is unseen by the average world-ling. And he is thereby

bonded to *samsāric* continuance. It is this inability to see and comprehend and come to terms with this true nature or *yathā-bhucca* of ourselves and of the world we live in which conceals from us, in our own stupidity, the true liberation process: *yathā-bhuccaṃ ajānantā bālā suddhiṃ amaññatha* Thig. v.143 [= not knowing the true nature of the world, the foolish persons imagine they have reached total purity.].

Thus we have to appreciate that the Buddha is called the Fully Enlightened One or *Sammā Sambuddha* because of his acquisition and possession of this knowledge. He is above the world in this vision and wisdom. So he is called *lokuttara*. But this is what every one of us is said to be capable of attaining as his followers or *maggānugā pacchā samannāgatā*. MN. III 8. The Buddha is transcendent but he is not divine. We have to accept him as our teacher *par excellence* because he has made known this primary truth to us. What he tells us all the time, in doing so, is about the terrible predicament [= *kicchaṃ*] in which the human is trapped in his *samsāric* continuance and the way in which he can liberate himself out of it [*dukkhañca ahaṃ paññāpemi dukhassa ca nirodhaṃ*]. On hearing this message [= *taṃ dhammaṃ sutvā*], the listener places his trust, literally his heart, on him. Based on this complete trust [*saddhā-paṭilābhena samannāgato*], he gains the conviction that the perfect higher life or *brahma-cariya* recommended for this purpose cannot be perfected while pursuing the life style of a house-holder [*nay'idaṃ sukaraṃ agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā ekanta-parisuddhaṃ ekanta-paripuṇṇaṃ brahmacariyaṃ caritun'ti* MN. I. 412]. The goal of *brahma-cariya* is to comprehend this self-liberating truth and be, more or less, merged in it [*brahma-cariya-pariyosāna*].

It is this primary reason which prompts us world-lings to choose and accept the Buddha as our teacher and guide. He alone indicates to us the path to liberation. That alone is the task of those who have reached the goal: *akkhātāro tathāgatā*. We ourselves have to work at it: *tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ*. This taking refuge in the Buddha or *saraṇa-gamana* thus becomes the first step in the life of

one who chooses to be a practising Buddhist. Once the religious mission of the Buddha became firmly established, this refuge-taking became three-fold, including within it also the Buddha's teaching or the *dhmma* which indicates the way to liberation and the body of his exemplary disciples, i.e. the *sangha* who in their own lives had proved the possibility of attaining this ideal. Via this, every Buddhist had invariably to be an embodiment of the *tisaraṇa*, i.e. the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Buddhist texts in fact speak of an earlier-period two-group refuge taking [*dve-vācīkā upāsakā*], prior to the existence of a consolidated *sangha*. We would thus maintain that, in spirit, refuge-taking had to be the following solemn promise -

In my life, the Buddha alone shall be my guide,
 the *saraṇa*, for liberation out of the ills of *saṃsāra*.
 So shall the *dhmma*, his teaching
 ever guide me infallibly in his place.
 The sangha, in their exemplary achievements
 shall unquestionably ever guide me
 to my goal in *saṃsāra*'s end.

Pañca-sīla as regulating the Behaviour of the Human and Moral Goodness in the Land

It became thus inevitable that these loyally bound refuge-seekers were guided through life in such a way that they infallibly attained their aspired goal. They had to go through a process of purposeful training and culture. They had to be disciplined in both areas of body and mind. This total process of religious upbringing in Buddhism, from the life of the layman in the household to that of the most advanced monastic aspirant goes under the broad concept of *sikkhā* or instructed and guided development and has three distinct stages which, it is to be noted, are necessarily and essentially successive and sequential, one following from the other [*anupubba-sikkhā anupubba-kiriya anupubba-paṭipadā* MN. I. 480].

It is very categorically stated that without perfecting the preceding one of basic grounding in moral goodness or *sīla*, the following stages of mind-culture, i.e. *samādhikkhandha* or the final one of wisdom-perfection, i.e. *paññākkhandha*, shall never be achieved [*sīlakkhandham aparipūretvā samādhikkhandham paripūressati samādhikkhandham aparipūretvā paññākkhandham paripūressati 'ti n'etaṃ thānaṃ vijjati* AN. III. 15].

Adhering very closely to this pre-planned pattern of Buddhist religious culture, the Buddhist lay disciple has to embark, immediately after his refuge-taking, on this initial moral culture of *pañca-sīla* [or universal moral goodness]. The word *sīla* here covers this entire area of basic moral goodness among lay humans, in the wholesomeness of their behaviour towards one another. Within it, there is no room whatsoever for any clan or tribal considerations of any sort. It is being realized more and more today that a perfect observance of these norms of moral goodness is a *sine qua non* for the secure continuance of humans on earth, free from any peril towards one another from within or without. These patterns of proper behaviour seem to be what the humans need to fulfil, without any need of their being externally imposed by any institutions, religious or otherwise. Any breaches of these norms of moral propriety, Buddhist teachings persistently maintain, are self-destructive and ruinous and bring about the downfall of the miscreant individuals in their very life in society [*idh'eva eso lokasmim mūlaṃ khaṇati attano* as at Dh. v. 247] by those very acts of their own misdemeanour.

Moral goodness in society via Religious Sensitivity or via Law Enforcement by the State

In a semi-legendary style, it is narrated in Buddhist literature from very early times that during periods of time when teachings of the Buddha do not prevail in the world, a secular ruler by the name of *Rājā Cakka-vatti* or Universal Monarch shall enforce these injunctions of *pañca-sīla*. At the time they were presented two and a half millennia ago, these seem to have been globally applicable, without

any justifiable resistance from social or religious encampments.

Global and universal respect for all life

has necessarily to be the basis for Moral Goodness

As the first injunction of *pañca-sīla*, *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī* or *pāṇo na hantabbo* required that no life shall be destroyed by man. In fact, as the very first of the *pañca-sīla* injunctions it commands global respect for all forms of life, of both man and animal, without any assumption that the latter were created secondarily for the use of the former. In certain Christian circles today, this assumption is totally rejected as being unhistorical and unacceptable to Christianity. Life being precious to every living thing everywhere, Buddhism decries its destruction at all times, and in any form, for any purpose. It appears to be universally gaining ground in the world today. The Buddhist stand is as follows.

*Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa sabbe bhāyanti maccuno
attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye.*

Dhp. v.129

All dread at being beaten with clubs and rods.

All dread being deprived of their lives.

Putting oneself in that position of the other,

Let no one kill, nor get others to kill.

Translated by the author

The fundamental basic assumption of Buddhist ethics seems to be the more or less axiomatic belief that all beings love comfort and happiness and are averse to pain, discomfort and displeasure: *sukha-kāmā* and *dukkha-paṭikkulā* [SN. IV. 172] It is un-questionably here that the battle of the haves and have-nots in the world is being fought. On this assumption, it becomes necessarily arguable that people must possess the wherewithal with which to enjoy and maintain these standards of joy and comfort. The ability to live unharmed and without being

destroyed necessarily takes precedence over all other considerations in life. This is why the *pañca-sīla* has respect for all life or total abstinence from destruction of life [*pāṇātipātā-veramaṇī*] as its first injunction.

Haves and have-nots

A dreaded situation to be averted

Then comes as the second injunction of *pañca-sīla* the respect for one's possessions and property the acquisition of which occupies the greater part of one's living process. This is what one works for, either by oneself, being self-employed, or by working under any other for wages. The contrasts in the degree of relative acquisition one gains thereby brings about the devastating situation of haves and have-nots in society. Buddhism puts forward the answer that it is man's energetic application and diligence in life that leads in the direction of affluence [*uṭṭhātā vindate dhanam* Sn. v. 187]. On the other hand, the absence of such energetic application [*anuṭṭhāna*] is stigmatised as a curse on the life of a householder. The Pali equivalent of this statement *anuṭṭhāna-malā gharā* [at Dh. v. 241], we discover is unfortunately misunderstood, presumably under Commentarial misdirection, and appears translated as 'non-repair is the bane of houses' in all the three major Theravada Buddhist countries of Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand. It is sad that for over centuries, mistakes like this in the Dhammapada have gone undetected and un-corrected.

The wealth thus justifiably acquired [*dhammikehi dhamma-laddhehi bhogehi*], through energetic exertion and application, with the sweat of one's brow [*sedāvakkhittehi* AN.II.67] and the strength of one's arms [*bāhā-bala-paricitehi* AN.III. 45, IV. 95] provides the humans with the wherewithal for the enjoyment of pleasures in the household [*tuttihi-jananakam*]. It has therefore to be the right of everyone not to be alienated from or dispossessed of what has been thus acquired. Thus Buddhism introduces as its second injunction in the *pañca-sīla* the precept forbidding theft or dispossessing others of their legitimately acquired possessions. It reads as *adinnādānā veramaṇī-sikkhā-padam*.

The dispossession of property and plunder in the world is becoming an international global malady today

From a socially conceivable individual position like this, in the smaller units of the family and the community, it becomes equally applicable to larger scale invasions and conquests which are carried out all around us all the time, by larger countries as well as powerful political blocks with well planned aggression and violence. In the world today, such acts come to be even internationally approved and endorsed as acts of national redress, ethnic rights and religious glory. Individually and collectively, the world is going so crazy today as to adduce even divine approvals and heavenly endorsements for such acts of violence and aggression. Thus Buddhism's second precept of not dispossessing others of their rightful possessions envisages all forms of individually carried out domestic thefts as well as acts of looting and plunder on land like high-way robberies and pirating at sea. One is not to lose sight of the larger scale global acts of international gangsterism in different blocks of varying political ideologies.

Moral goodness has necessarily to be born of individual good judgement and benign human behaviour. Sanity of judgement and public conscience has to condemn all such breaches of moral goodness which result from violation of *pañca-sīla*, anywhere and everywhere. Self-respecting public-spirited humans are now seen stepping forward globally everywhere, in the USA, England and Australia, with their self-organized concepts of Neighbourhood Watch Areas and Home Watch Areas, in the larger and smaller cities, to prevent such miniature acts of dispossession by theft. Citizens of all ages and grades, male and female, are seen to be courageously stepping forward in this process of moral cleansing and re-arming society against acts of violence and terrorism.

Sexual improprieties among men and women in the family and in society

Buddhism is keenly conscious of the vital role played by the female in the

human community in being the hub of the family as the progenitor of the species. She is also esteemed as the co-ordinator in the home and is thus glorified as the Friend in the Home - *mātā mittam sake ghare* [SN. I. 37]. In Buddhism, in the interests of everybody, love, marriage, sex and domestic harmony and unity are inseparably integrated. Therefore it becomes fundamentally vital, according to Buddhism, to maintain sexual proprieties within marriage. Conjugal-fidelity or trustworthiness between married partners was the king-pin within wedded life. No man shall over step his legally wedded wife [*para-dārañca gacchati* Dh. v. 246] in search of extra-marital sexual gratification [*sehi dārehi asantuṭṭho* Sn. v. 108]. This he shall do, neither by force nor with the consent of the other party [*sahasā sampiyena vā* Sn. v. 123].

These remarks convincingly show that within the glorified pedestal of marriage in Buddhism, the more modern attempts by writers on Buddhism, monks and laymen, non-Sri Lankan and as well as Sri Lankan, to smuggle in concepts like consensual consent among miscreant partners is deemed equally vulgar and damnable [*sahasā sampiyena vā tam jaññā vasalo iti* Sn 123]. We add here these words which we have expressed over and over again as a serious note of warning and correction. Conservatism of Buddhism has to stay where it stood two and a half millennia ago. This position naturally leads Buddhism to frown upon both pre-marital and extra-marital sexual gratification. This third *pañca-sīla* precept of *kāmesu micchācārā veramanī* which forbids the breach of sexual proprieties, in addition to its interest in safeguarding the esteemed edifice of one's own marriage, watches over the interests of the married life of others in guarding against gluttonous pleasure-seeking intruders from outside. Note the unmistakable forbidding red-light signals directed at these men at large in society in the *dhamma* statements like *yo ñātīnaṃ sakhānaṃ vā dāresu patidissati* Sn. v. 123 [= whosoever is seen trespassing into the midst of the wives of others like one's kinsmen and friends] and *parassa dāraṃ nātikkameyya* Sn. v. 396 [no one shall be guilty of sexually trespassing on the wife of another].

To thine own self be true
both in public and in private

The Buddhist concept of moral goodness in society steps next into yet another socially interacting area of honesty in transactions, person to person or institution to institution. This runs as *musā-vādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ*. At the higher levels of political and governmental circles, one hears today of this being referred to as transparency. There shall be no deceiving or falsification with regard to the actuality of things. Both aspects of misrepresentation either by affirmation or by denial in this area of dishonesty are equally censured: *Abhūta-vādī nirayaṃ upeti yo cā'pi katvā na karomī ti cā'ha* at Dhṃ. v. 306 [= The speaker who affirms what actually is not [*abhūta - vādī*] goes to hell, i.e. a degraded state of life after death. So also does one who having done something denies it [*ibid.*] It is interesting to note here how in one single four-lined verse this crime of dishonesty of untrue affirmation and denial is socially stigmatised on the one hand, in calling the miscreant as being criminally vulgar or *nihīna-kamma* and on the other, religiously condemned as being destined to be born in hell after death or *nirayaṃ upeti*.

Alcohol and drugs do rob humans
of their competence and skills

The very concise package of moral goodness in Buddhism, i.e. *pañca-sīla*, winds up with the insistence on sanity of judgement in action. Alcohol and drugs are believed to impair this faculty in the human [*yam pivitvā visaññī assa =* having taken which one loses one's power of judgement. Therefore the fifth precept reads as *surā-meraya-majja-pamāda-tṭhānā veramaṇī-sikkhā-padaṃ*, i.e. the precept which brings about avoidance of situations of inability and incompetence [*pamāda-tṭhāna*] brought about through alcoholic dis-functioning [*surāmeraya-majja-pamāda*]. Earliest Buddhist records refer to this corrosive effect of alcohol as judgement-impairing or wisdom-deteriorating [*paññāya dubbālī-karaṇa*] and include it under evils of drinking [*surāmeraya-pāne*

ādīnavam DN.] They go so far as to stigmatise humans who are under the influence of alcohol by reducing them to being ape-like in behaviour [*visaññi-karaṇiṃ pītvā diṭṭhā nā'humha vānarā*]

From basic Moral Goodness in the world of *pañca-sīla* to Spiritual Transcendence via seasonal Higher Sīla or *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha*

In the life of the lay Buddhist, man or woman, who is seriously keen on the fulfilment of his religious aspirations, the worth of this prescribed transition from *pañca-sīla* which is to be observed throughout one's life [*yāva-jīva* or *āpāṇa-koṭika*] to one of *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* observance which is very clearly indicated to be regularly observed, when and wherever possible on the *uposatha* days of the month cannot be over-emphasised.

On the other hand, we need to pointedly indicate, with all due apologies, that recent decades in Sri Lanka has witnessed an over-emphasised hue and cry about building up a Buddhist society which keeps the *pañca-sīla* precepts [*pansil rakina samājayak*]. The serious danger of this unduly circumscribed wording is that it gives a misleading feeling of making *pan-sil* or *pañca-sīla* the be all and end all of all Buddhist religious aspirations. Besides, many other groups whose identity we do not need to labour here to establish, have been at work, digging at the very roots of genuine and authentic *aṭṭha-sīla* or *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* observance, making it less than a half-day mockery. Our sincere intention in probing into this seriously muddled situation at the moment is the search for a possible correction, if the Buddhists, particularly the Theravada ones of Sri Lanka wish to awaken themselves towards such a remedial correction of this present lamentable situation.

Pañca-sīla and its operation and its multiple usefulness in society

It should now be clear that the institution of *pañca-sīla* in Buddhism begins primarily with a down-to-earth awareness of the need, and that for the sake of every one, of moral goodness in the land, anywhere and everywhere. Any breach in them is said to reduce a man in the human community, first and foremost, to the position of a social villain [*dussīlo*]. He is also said to bring about his own personal ruin in this very existence [*mūlaṃ khaṇati attano* Dh. v. 246].

It is obviously with this down-to-earth relevance [without any religious associations], that the Cakkavatti King also tells his subordinate provincial rulers who come to him, obviously irrespective of caste creed considerations, seeking advice as to how they should rule their kingdoms, enforcing the observance of the *pañca-sīla*, almost under state authority [*pāṇo na hantabbo* etc. DN.]. While doing so, the provincial rulers are permitted to carry on undisturbed with the political patterns they had hitherto followed in the government of their territories [*yathā-bhuttañ ca bhūñjatha* DN.II. 173 Cakkavattishanāda Sutta DN]. No pressure whatsoever is sought to overthrow any governments or forcefully eliminate any legitimate rulers of lands.

In terms of the religious influence under Buddhism, pressure for keeping *pañca-sīla* in proper practice came from two areas. We have shown above the socio-cultural assessment of the *pañca-sīla* during one's present existence. Buddhism also indicates the threat of birth in hell after death as a punishment for their breach. These warnings are uttered as follows. They are no doubt based on the fundamental religious requirement of faith and trust.

*Appahāya pañca-verāni dussīlo iti vuccati
kāyassa bhedaṃ duppañño nirayaṃ so upapajjati.*

AN. III. 205

He who abstains not from the five evil ways

is called a villain in the midst of men.

Such an unwise man, at the time of his death,
is destined to be born in hell.

Translated by the author

Invariable rewards of good living in this very life and hereafter

It is man himself who wills, with a responsibility for what he does in word and deed [*bhāṣati vā karoti vā*], so he shall receive rewards, good and evil, blissful and painful accordingly. The Dhammapada commences with this courageous assertion at verses 1 and 2 that a person who works with a wrathful and polluted mind [*manasā ce paduṭṭhena*] or with a delightful mind [*manasā ce pasannena*] shall inherit in consequence results which are either painful [*dukkhaṃ*] or are blissful [*sukhaṃ*]. Buddhism finds in this a very sound philosophical basis for moral goodness in the world. Its anthropocentric basis in being self-operative, in relating humans to their own patterns of behaviour, without being dictated to from outside, is very sound in its operation. It eliminates the very puerile position, as it does happen today, of divine powers above from being made to arbitrarily take sides of the divided human power blocks on earth.

All religious culture in Buddhism stands for progressive journeying towards Nirvana

Buddhism, with its acceptance of the cyclical continuance of human life through time and space and of the equally unavoidable acceptance of the succession of results of good and bad living in one's life flowing over to the next, had necessarily to postulate the need on the part of the Buddhist lay disciples in their quest for Nirvanic liberation, to upgrade their perfection in *sīla* from that of *pañca-sīla* of down-to-earth moral goodness to one of liberation-oriented spiritual culture or *adhi-sīla-sikkhā*.

The higher *sīla* of the *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha*

and what they necessarily imply

This higher *sīla* is what is provided through the seasonal observance [i.e. on the four *upoatha* days of the lunar calendar, and not as a life-long observance] of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*. All the four new injunctions of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*, as against those of the *pañca-sīla*, are self-opted abstentions by the lay householder from enjoyments like sex, unrestricted partaking of food, aesthetic enjoyments like music and dancing and even personal beautification all of which are normally allowed to lay house-holders.

Buddha's own insistence
on the observance of the uposatha

We find instances of the Buddha discovering among his lay householders many who are heedlessly irregular in their seasonal observance of the higher-grade *sīla* of *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha*. The Buddha points out to them that since they, as worldly beings, are constantly subject to perils of *samsāric* continuance in life that they should be more regular in their *uposatha* observances as a method of self-correction and self-protection. In these words of guidance given by the Buddha to his lay disciples to be regular in their seasonal observance of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha*, we see a very clear indication of both the direction of the way to the final Buddhist way of liberation in Nirvana and the intervening stages of cultural elevation through which the spiritual aspirant has to pass [See AN. V. p. 83f.].

The higher quality of the injunctions
of the *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*

What then are the virtues of the up-graded *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha sīla* as against those of the *pañca-sīla* ? The *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha sīla* commences, during its seasonal observance, by changing the third precept of the *pañca-sīla* which reads as *kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī* which implies propriety or chastity in sexual behaviour to one of complete abstinence or celibacy for lay householders,

i.e. *abrahmacariyā veramaṇī*. during that opted specified period of time, i.e. one full day of twenty-four hours. This, it is to be noted, is one of the primary vows, nay indeed the very first one, of those who take to monastic life in Buddhism. In monastic circles, male or female, this is essentially the beginning. An *upasampanna*, i.e. a monk or nun of senior status is expelled from the order for the breach of this. This involves the first serious offence of Pārājikā or expulsion from the Order for the monastics, male and female.

Restraint regarding consumption of food during the observance of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha*

Beginning with the higher discipline pertaining to sex, the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha sīla* brings in the next new precept [No. 6] relating to consumption of food, viz. *vikāla-bhojanā veramaṇī*. This injunction primarily relates to the cutting off the night meal as is clear from the precise phrasing in Pali as *rattūparato virato vikāla-bhojanā*. This attempt to regulate the eating habits of the lay community is a further step in the disciplinary process of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*. For the higher *sīla*-observing-householder, it begins with the self-opted cutting off of the night meal [*rattūparato*] on that specified single twenty-four day of *aṭṭhaṅga-sīla* observance. Here it is to be noted that the main stress is on the abstinence from the primary night meal. The abstinence from eating out of hours [*vikāla-bhojana*] between meals which follows is derivatively a secondary discipline. In the life of monks and nuns, in Buddhist monastic circles, this injunction relating to eating times has to be a life-long observance. The why and wherefore of this as far as the monastics are concerned is thoroughly dealt with by the Buddha himself in the Bhaddali Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya a [MN.I.437.ff].

Disruptive sensory stimuli of the world outside and our own impulsive rush for their gratification

The third in the list of abstinences of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* is sensory gratification of the eye and the ear through music, singing and seeing dancing

and theatrical performances [*nacca-gīta-vādita-visūkadassana*]. These indeed are segments of sensory gratification which the humans who can afford them are free to indulge in. They appear to involve no serious damage in themselves. But over-indulgence even in these not-so-offensive sources of gratification could lead to sickening morbidities and irreversible addiction. There is no denying that these are sources of pleasure-delivery channels which carry no evil in themselves. But the possible pathologically corrosive states of mind which derivatively develop out of these can indeed bring about serious psychopathic disturbances. Therefore a safe-distancing or *veramaṇī* from them, at least intermittently under the watchful eye of the *uposatha* which is much maligned today, seems safe and sensible. In any case, these seasonal abstinences do contribute very much to the spirit of *nekkhamma saṅkappa* which is advocated while one is, as a Buddhist, believed to be progressively advancing on the Eight-fold Path of Buddhism. Let us take note of what the Buddha has said about our sensory reaction to these stimuli with which the world of pleasure keeps bombarding us humans at every turn. This is the discrete and cautious attitude the Buddhists are required to develop in handling the sensory stimuli of the world.

*Na te kāmā yāni citrāni loke
saṅkappa-rāgo purisassa kāmo.
Tath'eva tiṭṭhanti citrāni loke.
Ath'ettha dhīrā vinayanti chandaṃ.*

SN.I.22

Whatever are beautiful things in the world,
in themselves have nothing lustfully evil in them.
While things of beauty stand in the world as they are,
the wise restrain their desires towards them.

Translated by the author

To these are also added areas of beautification and adornment like the use of flowers, garlands, cosmetics and ornaments [*mālā-gandha-vilepana-*

dhāraṇa- maṇḍana- vibhūsanatṭhānā veramaṇṇī. It is abundantly clear that as far as lay house-holders are concerned, there is absolutely no ban on the use of these. Via the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*, it is only a start to promote the moderate use of these that is stimulated by forbidding their use on that specific day of *uposatha* observance.

The eight-fold *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* is wound up with its last item of abstinence of the use of grandiose and luxurious beds and seats [*uccāsayana-mahāsayanā veramaṇṇī*]. It aims at a temporary reduction, on that specific day, even of the normally enjoyed sensory gratification for the sole purpose of gradually initiating and nurturing a disciplinary process of renunciation, i.e. *nekkhama* which is a basic and primary requirement of Buddhist spiritual culture. Under this *sīla* injunction, it is not the height of the beds from the ground that primarily matters.

Perverting views of the Buddhists regarding the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* and its expulsion of it from Buddhist lay life

It is vital to note at this stage, specially by Sri Lankan Buddhists, living in Sri Lanka as well as elsewhere in the world, that the observance of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* is to be undertaken only seasonally [and we categorically reject the life-long observance theory], on the four specified *uposatha* days of the month in the lunar calendar. And as to how often, according to one's choice. Without it, we would say, one ceases to be a Buddhist, a Buddhist of any worth. It is clearly the stepping stone to the ascending upward spiritual journey of the Buddhist. Do not misread what the Commentaries say or the Commentators are supposed to be saying. This what the authentic real texts say.

*Cātuddasī pannarasī yāva pakkhassa aṭṭhamī
pāṭihāriya-pakkhañca aṭṭhaṅga-susamāhitam
uposatham upavaseyya ...*

AN. as well as SN. I. 208

On the month's fourteenth and fifteenth days,
and on the eighths of the fortnight,
as well as on an additional day of the fortnight,
one shall observe the uposatha-sīla
which consists of eight injunctions.

Translated by the author

The meaningful observance of the *Aṭṭhaṅga-sīla* on the *uposatha* days requires that it has to be lived through the total period of one whole day, i.e. covering both divisions of day and night [*īmañca divasaṃ imañca rattim*]. Even today, this tradition is known to be adhered to by lay Buddhists of Thailand and Myanmar, honestly insisted upon by the monks of those countries. The *sīla*-delivering monk conveys this message to his audience before delivering the *sīla* precepts. This practice has virtually evaporated in Sri Lanka today, neither the monks nor the lay persons ever showing any awareness of or concern for it or ever appreciating its worth. This *malaise* is now known to be infecting even the English speaking Buddhist world outside Sri Lanka like England and America. No matter who ever is the carrier of the infection.

Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla and their religio-spiritual advance over *pañca-sīla*

It is clearly observable that the four additional injunctions of the *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* have their special applicability to night-time activities. They also definitely imply a qualitative advance of renunciation value, i.e. renunciation of *kāma*, i.e. gratification of sensory delights, over and above the *pañca-sīla* injunctions, specially in the areas of sex, food and personal gratification of sensual desires. Their being breached during the first day-time half of the *uposatha* is hardly conceivable.

On the other hand, the observance of these higher grade precepts during the

aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla implies a greater measure of self-opted abstinence, and therefore of a higher degree of personal renunciation-discipline and of consequent spiritual culture. The religio-cultural achievement of what is envisaged in early Buddhist suttas like the Sāmañña-phala under *vivicc'eva kāmehi* at the end of the first *jhāna* attainment, we feel, appears to see its first beginnings under these items of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*, in their endeavour to reduce the proneness towards *kāma* like sex, plentiful eating and licentious entertainment.

In the light of these observations, the urgent need for the retrieval of the observance of the *aṭṭhaṅga uposatha-sīla* to its original position of being a full day twenty-four hour activity, at least once a month, or more often wherever possible, as a seasonal *uposatha* observance is to be viewed as the crying need of the day by all dissentient Sri Lankan Buddhists, wherever they live, both monks and laymen.

The *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*, lived to its full vigour and vitality as prescribed in the *suttas* alone, and not in the decadent manner as handed down in today's Sri Lankan tradition, [i.e. from sun-rise up to about sun-set time or even earlier] constitutes the inner core of discipline and culture or the *sīla* and *sikkhā* in Buddhism. Its regular practice contributes to the enrichment of the very life-blood of Buddhism, giving its adherents the basic religio-cultural growth of *nekkhamma* or seasonal renunciation-detachment. We cannot over emphasise the point that the seasonal *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* therefore needs to be practised with far greater veneration and with the respect and the seriousness it really deserves in the hands of all parties concerned.

The *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* observance in Buddhism
and what stands in the way of its honest practice

In the world today, there seems nothing more menacing to mankind than the round-the-clock work ethic now we are being plunged in. Whence its arrival here

in our midst ? We have sensed it enough and shall continue to do so *ad infinitum*. Does anybody know how it has smuggled itself into our midst ? No body stops to think that it is a curse which man, with his multi-dimensional wisdom and self-generated notions of progress, productivity and profit has brought upon himself. Will anybody ever have the courage to propose legislation against it ?

Deeply entrenched in the midst of the human community is the other global menace of consumerism which drives the human on a death-seeking wild goose chase, both physically and psychically, which knows no end nor any dimension of it as large or small. Those who sponsor it, often well within clouds of anonymity, and at times claiming no connections whatsoever with it, are indeed much more misanthropist than the despised capitalists of a generation ago. Humans, in the paralysing grip of this consumerism today are daily becoming helpless pawns who can only pray and hope for a meaningless posthumous release.

Brain tumours and cancers of all sorts and un-suspected heart attacks to which more and more humans, both young and old, are succumbing today are assaults from within ourselves because we are legitimate inheritors to what our physical bodies have to offer us as natural by products. As long as we remain in this plane of physical existence, arrogantly laying claims to our bodies of flesh and blood as gifts given to us, we shall have to collect without complaint whatever is delivered at our doors. Today more and more people helplessly die of Aids which comes to us on our own personal invitation rather than by arbitrary or aggressive invasion. No body would want to believe that the victims of these aggressive assaults are paying heaven-imposed penalties written down on unsigned documents, and impersonally delivered to us.

Sanity is now coming to prevail over what have been mere beliefs thus far held in the name of religions. With regard to the recent tsunami disaster of a few years ago, insanities of religious beliefs came to find public expression. In these, gods in violent moods of revenge were allowed to go hay wire in their wrathful anger, avenging the injustices done by followers of other creeds to their faithful

adherents. A few down-to-earth humans, however, with sanity in their heads, spoke out. Their voices were heard.

We have endeavoured to reveal that all misfortunes the humans are going through in their living process of cyclical continuance is an integral part of the very evolutionary process in which we are caught up. This is Buddhism's unwavering message of religion, well before the appearance of the so-called world religions known to mankind today. The so-called world religions must necessarily surrender their designation the moment they start championing their lop-sided clan or tribal ethics, seeing those of other faiths as infidels and heathens.

There is every possibility that we could discover among our readers an erudite student of Buddhism who, with his ingenuity, could point out to us the possibility of successful observance of a half-day *aṭṭhaṅga uposatha-sīla* [i.e. less than twenty-four hour observance], under special circumstances. We would be very glad and welcome such a one into our midst. We ourselves have a story with us and we shall be glad to present it to our readers at large, avoiding the possibility of any distortion coming into it at any stage in anybody's hands. [See JATAKA V & VI. pp .1-5 No. 511 Kimchanda Jataka].

Expulsion of the Aṭṭhaṅga-Uposatha-Sīla from the religious life of the Upāsakas and Upāsikās - the Buddhist Lay-men and Lay-women

We are concerned today with the possibility of retrieving into the midst of our lay Buddhists, essentially of the Sri Lankan brand, the seasonal observance of the *aṭṭhaṅga uposatha-sīla*. In the light of orthodox Theravāda Buddhist teachings, we wish to emphasize that it has to be a regular seasonal event of

twenty-four hour duration. We have already indicated earlier why the second half of the day, i.e. the night half [*imañca rattim*], without any excuse, has to be brought into this program. As is clear from the Kimchanda Jātaka referred to above, if any concession has to be granted, under any circumstances, for making it a half-day observance, it has necessarily to be the second night-half. It is more or less this second half which sits in judgement over the honest observance of precepts nos. 3, 6, 7 and 8 of the higher *sīla* which have a self-ennobling renunciation in the temporary suspension of the pleasures or *kāma* enjoyed by the lay house-holders. It is the *nekkhamma* or renunciation character in their self-accepted observance.

Let us begin by saying at the very outset that the regular observance of the eight precepts or *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*, in marked contrast to the *pañca-sīla*, indicates an unmistakably clear upgrading in the religio-cultural disciplinary process in our pursuit of Nirvana. The precepts clearly show that they bring about higher-grade qualitative changes in our lives. In our Nirvanic pursuit, any conscious or unconscious attempts to short-circuit or by-pass these ennobling stages of religious development are self-ruinous. Any and every attempt to reduce the higher-powered full-day *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* [of *imañca divasaṃ imañca rattim* duration] to a day-time half-day session, with today's accompanying senseless mock ritual of *pavāraṇā* to terminate the half-day session has to be declared a futile attempt at self-deception.

It is our conjecture that this higher-grade value of the eight-fold or *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* has been obscured and obliterated by the arrival on the scene of a new eight-fold *sīla* with a brand-name *ājīva-aṭṭhamaka-sīla*. This has no more than a quantitative change of the five precepts being stretched out to make eight. There is not even a trace of qualitative change, discipline-wise.

A closer examination would reveal that this new package of *Ajīva-aṭṭhamaka* offers hardly any new upgraded virtues above the *pañca-sīla*. It has taken out [and we do not know for what reason] the 5th precept of *surāmeraya-*

majjapamādatthānā-veramaṇī and added in its place a wide-angle new precept as *micchājīvā veramaṇī*. In some quarters of the western world, this unjustified manipulation has been resisted and *surāmeraya veramaṇī* has been restored to its position as the eighth precept. This has led to the formulation of a new list of eight precepts [i.e. a third one] called the 'The Eight Lifetime Precepts'. These, together with the traditional *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* are seen sometimes referred to as 'Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness'. Be that as it may. We would like to add here that, in our opinion, the *uposatha sīla*, in contrast to *pañca-sīla*, contributes something much more than happiness to one's religio-cultural progress on the path to Nirvana. It gets the disciple in the direction of *nekkhamma-saṅkappa* which is the indispensable second stage in the upward journey of the Eight-fold Path.

Here is such a piece of assessment we have picked up at random. We present it here for the reader to critically examine it with an awareness of early Buddhist teachings in mind. It comes to us from a publication named Contemporary Buddhism, Vol.5 No. 1. 2004 where Jaquetta Gomes writes as follows.

'Venerable Hammalawea Saddhatissa Maha Thera (1997) writes in his book, *Buddhist Ethics* (Chapter 4, The Underlying Ideals of the Moralities, p. 80):

"Regarding the length of time during which the eight Precepts should be observed ... the keeping may be periodical and therefore constitute 'periodical virtue' (*kālapariyanta sīla*)... Lifelong Sīla (*āpāṇakoṭṭika sīla*) is that practised in the same way but undertaken for as long as life lasts. *Aṭṭha sīla* [*Aṭṭhaṅga Uposatha Sīla*] is therefore of two kinds, periodical and life-long."

However, it is not clear to us in this article whether the comments of Dr. Saddhatissa end here. But with regard to his above statement '*Aṭṭha sīla* [*Aṭṭhaṅga Uposatha Sīla*] is therefore of two kinds, periodical and life-long', for which he quotes Buddhaghosa as his source of information and authority, we

have reasonable doubts. We feel that Buddhaghosa's two-fold classification or *dukas* in the Visuddhi-magga, on the whole and particularly of the *Pañcamaka-duka* [Vism. I. p. 12], is of *sīla* as a collective whole including within it both *pañca-sīla* and, *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* and not of a single segment of the division, namely the *Aṭṭhaṅga-sīla*. It would have been more than obvious to Buddhaghosa that *Aṭṭhaṅga-sīla* being Canonically named an *uposatha-sīla*, i.e. to be observed on specified days, could not, under any circumstance, be classified as life-long. What Buddhaghosa does here specifically is that he speaks of *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* as *kāla-pariyanta* and *pañca-sīla* as *yāva-jīva* or *āpāṇa-kotika*. On the other hand, what appears to be Dr. Saddhatissa's division of *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* into two as *yāva-jīva* and *kāla-pariyanta*, in our opinion, is a serious mis-representation, with a possibility of drastic consequences.

Further, Jaquetta Gomes the writer of the present article which we are examining, after presenting the views of Dr. Saddhatissa, proceeds to express what appears to be her own opinion as to the new turn which Buddhism should take, for its own survival in the Western world. Here are her comments.

"The *Uposatha* Precepts continue to be regularly used at Viharas in the West on *Uposatha* days. However it is not easy for most lay people living in a household life to observe the *Uposatha* Precepts on a permanent basis. Consequently, it is the second set of Eight Precepts, the *Ājivaṭṭhamaka Sīla* (Eight Precepts with Right Livelihood as the Eighth) that have been found to be ideally suited for committed lay people in the West."

Just a few comments on the above observations. As the very word *uposatha* implies those eight precepts of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* are not meant to be observed on a permanent basis. It just cannot be. Somebody is making a serious mistake somewhere. This is far-too-serious an error of judgement which has to be cleared forthwith. The *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* observance is to be undertaken only on a seasonal basis, on the days of the *uposatha* in the lunar calendar. In

our Canonical texts, they are indicated as follows.

*cātuddasī pannarasī yāvapakkhassa aṭṭhamī
pāṭihāriya-pakkhañca aṭṭhaṅga-susamāhitam
uposatam upavaseyya ...*

AN I 144 / SN. I. 208

It is also adequately clear that these observances are restricted to specific limited periods of twenty-four hours [i.e. the day-half and night-half of a single day = *imañca divasam imañca rattiṃ*].

If on the other hand, Dr. Saddhatissa's division of the *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* into two as life-long and periodical is accepted as correct, why should not the people in the West then sensibly take the easy-going and acceptable periodical one and practice it instead of setting their eyes on the allegedly life-long and impossibly laborious one and expel it totally out of the scene? It is lamentable that their choice thereafter falls on the *Ajiva-aṭṭhamaka-sīla* which, as we have already shown, stands no comparison with the *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* regarding its religio-ethical-uplifting value.

On the other hand, the 4th precept of *musāvādā-veramaṇī* which is primarily meant to exemplify correctness of speech or *sammā vācā* is splintered into its four-fold subdivisions as false speech [*musā vādā*], slander [*pisunā vācā*], harsh speech [*pharusā vācā*] and frivolous speech [*sampappalāpa*], to elevate this group of *sīla* also, as it were, to one of eight, competing though not qualitatively, with the higher-grade standard list of *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*. Those who pledge a life-long commitment to any type of these Lifetime Precepts, for whatever reason, without any sensitivity to or concern for the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*, would appear to be wheeling along in renovated and re-decorated horse carriages from America or Europe, on their way to Far East, as it were, without wanting to utilise readily provided jet air lines.

In the light of what we have stated so far, there seems to be very little need

to be groping in the dark with regard to the circumstances under which the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* appears to have had its genesis. We admit the paucity of published material on the subject as well as the presence of several unwarranted interpretations of available source material which pay no attention to historical stratification. There is no denying that religious culture in Buddhism commences with *sīla*. *Sīle paṭiṭṭhāya naro sapañño* [= a wise person commences with *sīla* ... to develop his religious culture] goes the saying.

As we have indicated at the very outset, the Buddhistness of the lay householder commences with the pledge to uphold the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha as the sole source of his spiritual guidance. This is immediately followed by the awareness of the need to fortify and reinforce moral goodness in the world without any caste creed differences. The observance of the five-fold moral injunctions or *pañca-sīla* is unquestionably resorted to for this purpose.

The *pañca-sīla* stands up against the social improprieties in the human community, indicating both their anti-social character and their religious corrosiveness. Socially they are referred to as a source of fear and dread [*pañca bhayāni* and *pañca verāni*] and religiously referred to as leading to birth in degrading states of existence [*nirayaṃ so upapajjati*]. Even at a time when the teachings of the Buddha do not prevail in the world, a Cakkavatti King is believed to take command over these, more or less, with a legal command over them, law enforcement being essentially a part and parcel of good government in the land.

The *pañca-sīla* is thus seen to lay down a global pattern of moral goodness, more than two and a half millennia ago. It is meant for regular life-long observance by mankind, to discipline their lives, for peace on earth and goodwill among men. The fivefold acts of misdemeanor in society, in violating the injunctions of the *pañca-sīla*, are what Buddhism looks upon as evil in the world or unwholesome action of mankind [i.e. *pāpa* or *akusala*].

Religiously viewed, the spiritual life of the Buddhist commences with the

abstinence from what is deemed evil or *akusala*. *Pañca-sīla* must therefore necessarily imply a down-to-earth initial cleansing process. It is good for one and all, for all humans, Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist. The Buddhists do need to know that they require further disciplining, well beyond *pañca-sīla*, if they are honest and sincere in their pursuit of Nirvana. The early Buddhist texts present the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* as the next higher-grade *sīla* for the lay householders, above the *pañca-sīla*. It is a seasonal observance, not a life-long one, to be undertaken on the four phases of the moon [full moon, new moon and the two quarter moons], normally encompassing the full duration of the day, i.e. the day half and night half [*imañca divasaṃ imañca rattim*].

The four new injunctions of the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* consist of the 3rd precept *kāmesu micchācārā* of the *pañca-sīla* being upgraded to one of *abrahmacariyā veramaṇī* or total celibacy, together with the other three additional ones of the rejection of the night-meal [*rattūparato*], and of entertainment via music, dancing etc. [*nacca-gīta-vādita-visūkadassana*] and of beautifying oneself with flowers and ornaments [*mālā-gandha-vilepana-dhāraṇa-maṇḍana-vibhūšana-ṭṭhānā*] and the rejection of luxuriously comfortable and grandiose seats and beds [*uccāsayana-mahāsayanā*]. They all imply a voluntarily undertaken spirit of renouncing or *nekkhamma*, even temporarily and seasonally, of the inborn desire for sensory gratification. This is a new way of thinking which has necessarily to be undertaken by a Buddhist in his pursuit of Nirvana. This is clearly manifest in the Noble Eightfold Path as *nekkhamma-sankappa* [under *sammā-sankappa*], in its very second stage of the gradual upward-ascent. This self-opted moving away from sensory gratification is also implied in the *jhānic* way in the description of the first *jhāna* as *vivicc'eva kāmehi vivicc'eva akusalehi dhammehi*. This regulated attitude to the enjoyment of sensory pleasures is being accepted in the English-speaking Western world today under a new norm, worded as 'delay gratification' as a necessary step, i.e. the ability to say 'no thank you' to sensory stimuli of the external world, in the development of the much-needed basic human culture of restraint and discipline.

As an epilogue to this essay where we endeavour to clarify for ourselves the vital ingredients which groom an average world-ling on his journey from the state of an untutored commoner [*assutavā puthujjano*] to one of an adequately informed disciple [*sutavā ariya-sāvako*] we wish to briefly add the following. The indispensable entry into Buddhism is via the three-fold refuge or *tisaraṇa*. Thereafter one is washed clean to be acceptable to the human community via the purge he is put through with the *pañca-sīla*. Thus far he is safe from being locked up behind bars of state prisons or being ceaselessly consumed in the devastating purgatories after death. That is why the *pañca-sīla* is expected to be a life-long observance as a security against such calamitous situations. We meet the Buddha himself constantly urging lay householders who lead a perilous life in their *samāric* journeying to undertake seasonal observance of *uposatha sīla*, i.e. observances undertaken on days of the moon. We have shown above how the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* brings about an entirely new phase of religio-spiritual culture which is directly tied up with Nirvanic liberation aspirations and this alone prepares the human worldling for his journey in the direction of his final liberation in Nirvana.

In the quotation from the Visuddhimagga [Vism.I.p.12] we discover the Great Commentator Buddhaghosa attempting to present several two-fold divisions or *dukas* [as many as seven] of *sīla* in Buddhism. This undertaking of the Commentator, we have no doubt, is a division of *sīla* as a totality or collective whole in to two's and not of its subdivisions like the *Pañca-sīla* or the *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla*. We are driven to view the division of the *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* as being two-fold with regard to the duration of observance is a serious error resulting from a gross misunderstanding of the Commentator.

What the Commentarial tradition of the Visuddhimagga tries to present as seasonal [*kāla-pariyanta*] and life-long [*āpāṇa-koṭīka*], we believe, are none other than *Aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha-sīla* as being *kāla-pariyanta* and *Pañca-sīla* as being *yāva-jīva* or *āpāṇa-koṭīka* respectively, as they rightly are.